

Forest Land for Sabarimala Pilgrims Centre

2187. SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN:
SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Kerala Government has submitted any proposal to allot forest land for use of Sabarimala pilgrims centre for expansion of facilities there;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have taken decision to give land; and

(d) if not, whether Government would consider favourably to allot 20 hectares of forest land to Sabarimala, to meet their urgent requirement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONEMNT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The Government of Kerala had earlier in 1993 submitted a proposal for diversion of 115.60 hectare forest land under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for providing amenities to pilgrims of Sabarimala Temple. While this proposal was under process, the State Government in December 1995 forwarded another proposal involving 20 hectare of forest land for the same purpose. The State Government was requested to carry out a study so as to minimise any adverse environmental effect of the development activity in the area and to prepare a long term Master Plan as majority of the forest area formed part of Periyar Tiger Reserve. Despite repeated reminders, the State Government did not furnish all the required information. Meanwhile, the Ministry has approved diversion of 0.4225 hectare are on 26.11.98 for construcion of sewage treatment plant at Cheriyanavottam as it was site specific and for an eco-friendly use and 0.20 hectare for construction of check-dam at Kunnar for water augmentation & allowed temporary use of 5.00 hectare at Pamba for parking facilities on 2.2.2000.

During 2000, a Committee lead by Shri O. Rajagopal, Hon'ble

[11 August, 2000]

RAJYA SABHA

Minister of State for Law, Justice & Company Affairs alongwith Shri Ramesh Chennithala, M.P. has inspected the site on 26th and 27th March, 2000. The Committee has made detailed observations and suggested action on removal of unauthorised constructions & dumped garbags from Pamba, preparation of long term detailed master plan of the entire complex, action plan for pollution control of Pamba river, etc. The State Government has been requested on 8.6.2000 to initiate action on the above recommendations and formulate a proposal accordingly for fresh consideration of the Ministry. In view of this the already submitted proposal for balance area has been closed.

The State Government has not put forward any proposal pursuant to Ministry's request of 8.6.2000 for fresh consideration.

Polythene Menace

2188. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that over five lakh cows die every year in the country on account of swallowing polythene bags;

(b) whether milk from animals/cattle who fall sick on account of consumption of polythene, has affected the health of large number of people; and

(c) what steps Government are taking to save the cattle and people from polythene menace?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI BABU LAL MARANDI): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Environment and Forests is not aware of any systematic survey done on the death of cows in the country due to swallowing of polythene bags and the effect of consumption of polythene bags on the quality of milk produced by them.

(c) Municipal bodies and non-governmental organisations have taken steps to provide shelters for stray cows. The Ministry of Environment and Forests have notified the recycled Plastics Manufacture and Usage Rules, 1999 to check littering to plastic bags